

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 13, 14, 16, 18, and 20-35 are pending in the present application; Claim 33 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 33-35 were objected to; and Claims 13, 14, 16, 18, and 20-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwata et al. (U.S. 2003/0012586) in view of Kenmochi (JP 11-278467).

Claims 33-35 were objected to because of an informality in the phrase “a shape of arc.” In response to this objection, in Claim 33, the objected to phrase was changed to “a shape of an arc.” Claims 34 and 35 appear to be proper and need no correction.

As this is the only amendment to the claims, and the insertion of the word “an” does not raise any new issues, entry of this amendment after the final rejection is respectfully requested as the amendment does not necessitate a further search and clearly overcomes the objection.

Claims 13, 14, 16, 18, and 20-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwata et al. in view of Kenmochi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention, as recited in independent Claim 13, for example, pertains to a storage container. There is a bag made of a flexible material and configured to store a substance. The bag includes a fold along which the bag deforms into a predetermined shape.

Further, the storage container comprises a sheet having a higher rigidity than the bag, the sheet being without folds and on one side of the bag which is perpendicular to the opening of the bag, the sheet including a plurality of at least one of recesses and holes which are arranged in a line on an outer peripheral surface, are configured to receive fingers of a user and are for gripping the storage container.

The outstanding Office Action utilizes Iwata et al. as the primary reference and acknowledges at the bottom portion of page 5 that Iwata et al. “fail to teach a plurality of at least one of recesses and holes which are arranged in a line on an outer peripheral surface.”

To make up for this deficiency of Iwata et al., the outstanding Office Action at the bottom of p. 5 relies on Kenmochi which is alleged to teach a storage container comprising a sheet having a rigidity. However, this is not the case. What the outstanding Office Action refers to as the sheet 30 of Figure 3 is described in paragraphs [0044]-[0045] as being a carton box or container 30. This carton box or container 30 has a non-skid agent 44 applied to the grasping part. A carton box or container as disclosed in Figure 3 of Iwata et al. certainly does not meet the requirements of the sheet, as set forth in independent Claim 13.

The sheet is an important feature of independent Claim 13 and is clearly recited as being different from the bag as it has a higher rigidity than the bag. By combining the bag made of a flexible material with a sheet having a higher rigidity than the bag, advantages of being able to readily dispense the toner within the bag result. Thus, the sheet of the invention has a rigidity feature which helps empty the toner, in addition to the recesses or holes which help grip the storage container.

Clearly, the rigidity feature of a sheet attached to a flexible bag are absent from Kenmochi and this rigidity feature provides a significant advantage.

Accordingly, independent Claim 13, and similarly independent Claims 24 and 31 are patentable over the prior art.

Further, dependent Claim 18 recites that the sheet is configured to assist in deformation of the bag so the bag is reduced in volume by being bent along the fold. By using a carton box or container 30, such a feature of the sheet (which the outstanding Office Action alleges is the container 30) cannot result from the combination of Iwata et al. and

Kenmochi. The carton box 30 is a non-forming element and does not interact with the bag in the manner claimed.

Accordingly, dependent Claim 18 is patentable over the prior art.

The other dependent claims are patentable for at least the reasons the independent claims from which they depend are patentable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is requested.

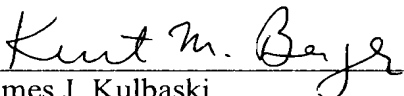
Respectfully submitted,

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